M 243 The cultivation of rice serves less to nourish the native than for trade. He usually sells his harvest immediately after the husking.

T M 247 Peanuts thrive in the region of the Banfumu and among the Bankutshu. They grow best in light soil and are not suitable for land cleared from the great forest. The crop demands a great deal of care and regular upkeep. Fields invaded by weeds yield nothing. The harvest takes place when the crop is mature and is the task of the women with the help of the children. The peanuts are placed in baskets carried on the back and taken to the village. The native spreads them out in the sun to dry. He turns them again and again, two or three times a day, and brings them into the hut at night.

T M [462]

M 249 Sugar-cane plantations are set up in marshy lowlands.

[462] All the work on this crop falls to the men. These plantations are found only in regions where the natives make masanga, sugar-cane beer. Sugar-cane fields are especially numerous in the villages on the lower Lukenie and the Fimi.

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M 244 As a rule the natives also cultivate a few legumes, sweet potatoes, and yams, but on a small scale and without giving them any particular care. [61]

Hunting

M 224 462 Hunting is practiced only by men. They engage in it, not for sport, diversion, or relaxation, but for the sole purpose of procuring meat and fat.

M 224 857 From their earliest childhood, the boys get together to beat the grass and catch mice, rats, and other rodents which swarm in the bush. Nothing is more interesting than to see them at work. Ten, fifteen, or sometimes twenty of them form a large circle. Armed with sticks, they beat the grass and make an unbelievable din. Little by little the circle narrows, moving in on a small well-cleared space. The oldest, most daring and most agile of the boys keep watch over this space, their eyes alert and riveted on the edge of the grass, ready to pounce. The beaters redouble their zeal, strike, shout, gesture, and gradually drive all the rodents

006 point to bathe in it and to refresh themselves. [146]

● 273 In addition to water which is the customary drink of all the tribes, we found the following beverages according to region: palm wine, malafu; sugarcane beer, masanga; and pombe, maize beer.

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Fig. 84. Calabash for Palm Oil, also for Water.

Palm wine, the native malafu, although liked, is usually not very much in demand, especially when the native can replace it with masanga, sugar-cane beer. We found it among all the peoples, however, although actually only the Ipanga-Yaelima and the Basongo Meno-Bankutu drink it regularly.

[439] In the other regions palm wine is made particularly in the villages near government posts or commercial establishments for the benefit of the Whites. These villages usually have a professional vintager.

The vintage comes from tapping the trees. The nsese palm, raffia, and the oil palm are chiefly used.

273 481 The native has three methods of climbing the trees for the vintage. The first is the one we described for gathering clusters

of the palm nuts, the second one consists of leaning a pole-ladder against the palm or fastening rungs to the trunk itself; the third is to dig holes in the trunk to serve as steps. The native climbs to the crown and cuts a palm leaf just below the terminal bud. He digs a rather deep opening in the wound and plants a palm leaflet in it to serve as a channeling trough. At the other end of this trough, the native fastens a calabash. The palm sap fills the hole and flows slowly [147] down the trough into the calabash. The native comes to collect it early in the morning. 273 481

When fresh, this wine seemed delicious to me; fermented, I found it undrinkable! 273

The natives, on the other hand, went only after it has fermented for three or four days.

Another method, simpler but less profitable, is to cut down the palm tree, lop off the crown, and gather the sap that flows out. Used in this way, a palm tree may yield, at most, 10 to

Fig. 85. Masanga Brewery, Basakata.

15 liters of wine and is permanently destroyed. The wine, moreover, is of a decidedly inferior quality. A native would never dare offer it to the head of a post.

Sugar-cane beer, the native masanga, is the drink most in demand.

In certain regions, notably among the Basakata-Balesa, we found one or two large establishments for making beer in each village. These breweries are located a little outside the village. The equipment is very rudimentary. It consists of a large, cleared space with the ground well beaten, a straw roof sheltering

273 a sort of large basin resembling a canoe, two or four beating paddles, a strong stationary bar, a pressing apparatus made of lianas, a storage vat, and calabashes.

[244] [148] Sugar cane is grown communally on a rather large scale. The natives cut it shortly before it is fully ripe. Men, women, and children participate in this work. The whole harvest is carried to the brewery shed. The sugar cane, cut in pieces, is thrown into the mash tub, and two or sometimes four men crush it as much as possible with large beetles, reducing it to a sort of whitish pulp. When this pulp is sufficiently thin, the natives put it in the press made of lianas, which is attached so as to hang under the bar and over the vat. To keep the press from coiling up as a result of the twisting, they insert a stick in it perpendicular to the bar. Two men vigorously twist the press, squeezing out every last drop of the sweet juice. The liquid is caught in the vat and then poured into large calabashes and carried to the village. Masanga is truly pleasant, refreshing, and delicious when it is fresh. It has no intoxicating effect. The natives, however, do not drink it until it has fermented. They add to it the bark of a small plains shrub, put the waste from the sugar cane around the calabashes, and expose them to the sun for one or two days to induce very active fermentation.

Sugar-cane beer is always imbibed communally.

All the important ceremonies are accompanied by heavy drinking. Marriage, birth, death, burial, the return from important hunts, the appearance of the new moon, a visit from a neighboring chief, and even our arrival in certain villages are all reasons for organizing big native celebrations where the emptying of great numbers of calabashes of masanga is the order of the day. The natives gather in the shade of the big trees in the village or under the public shelter. The calabashes of masanga are set in the center or poured into big pots. Everyone drinks as much as he wants, as long as there is any left and as long as he can. Meanwhile, the music is in full swing, and there is singing and dancing. Hemp is very often smoked, and the drinking always continues up to the point of brutish drunkenness. It is hard to realize what enormous quantities of this heady beverage some natives can imbibe. Pokei, the Banfumungu chief at Engrei,

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273 ordinarily does not stop until his tenth liter, and he is not the biggest drinker. Very often [149] the celebrations degenerate [519] into bloody brawls. The drunken native flies into a rage over trifles, quarrels, and does not hesitate to use his weapons.

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562 Among certain tribes, notably the Banfumungu, women under no circumstances may be present at important festivities or participate in large-scale drinking. Pokei assures us that they are excluded because of their vindictive temperament. "We men," he said, "sometimes fight during these celebrations, but the next day haven't we forgotten our quarrels? The women would also fight. Do they know how to hold their tongues even when they haven't drunk masanga? The next day they would go on quarrelling. The husbands would step in. A village quarrel would follow every celebration! No, the women may not drink masanga."

It would be a mistake, however, to believe that the women strictly observe this prohibition. Oh no! More than one has her little drop of masanga inside her hut, and on occasion intentionally pours herself a little too much. Masanga is not taboo for them!

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[415] Sugar-cane beer is served in small earthenware cups, pieces of a calabash, or wooden cups.

East of Balesa-Batete territory, masanga seems to be unknown, or at least we did not find any, either among the Ipanga-Batitu or among the Bokala-Yaelima.

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415 Among the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu of the Bena Dibele-Kole region, the natives chiefly consume palm wine.

They also make very inferior beer from maize or millet.

To make this beer, the native crushes the maize or millet, steeps it in spring water, and lets it ferment in earthenware jars.

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531 These jars are shaped more or less like the water jug with the spherical body, but have a very broad and higher neck. They are usually quite large. The cups used for palm wine and beer by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutu are always carved out of wood. They are found in all shapes, from a simple, undecorated small keg to a splendidly fashioned human figurine. In certain villages, notably at Tipolo and Bakoba, we found cups made of buffalo horn, decorated [150] with carved designs. Cups shaped like horns are sometimes carved out of wood. These are usually larger and more carefully decorated.

the owner, and everyone who has helped gets his share according to the amount of work he has done. [99] Frequently a big sugar-cane beer spree is started, where disgusting scenes often take place until finally the drunken men are taken home by their wives. In civilized Europe it is sometimes not much better.

Boats are made just large enough for two men, as well as others sufficient for a hundred or even a hundred and fifty men. The big war canoes of the great chief Evoloko of Waka and of the former chief of Bandaka, a certain Isaempoko, are known throughout the region. The war canoe of the latter was said to hold a hundred and fifty men, and the edge of this canoe to reach up to the shoulders of a fairly tall Negro. The ordinary canoe in which Whites travel is, as a rule, sufficiently large for twenty to thirty oarsmen.

The prices of canoes vary, according to size and strength, from 200 to 10,000 mitako.

The Lokole

The lokole plays a very large part in the life of the Negro. Without the lokole, the life of the Negro would be inconceivable.

The lokole can be best described as the public telephone with which the Negro makes his thoughts known publicly from village to village.

The lokole is to the Negro what the trumpet signal is to the soldier.

The lokole calls the men to meetings, to war, and to the hunt; the lokole calls all the people, great and small, to the dance. During the dance it is the loyal accompanist until deep in the night; its monotonous sound brings the enthusiasm of the dancers almost to the point of frenzy.

The Negro telephones his friends at great distances and explains what he wants. If two Negroes from the same village or from different villages have a quarrel, they abuse each other over the lokole, and the whole world is kept fully up-to-date on the details of the dispute. Each one tries to blacken the reputation of the other in the eyes of the other villagers. If someone dies in the village, it is proclaimed everywhere the whole night through, by means of the lokole, that